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THE CENTER'S ACTIVITIES IN CAIRO

Much of the work of the Cairo office is not very spectacular and attracts little attention locally. A number of inquiries are received by mail every week which are answered more or less promptly, depending on their nature. Requests for photographs and other information, especially bibliographical data, come in regularly, and to fulfill them as well as possible and as quickly as possible takes much time and often much energy. We try to keep in touch with the other Schools affiliated with the Archaeological Institute of America as well as with museums and universities at home, and even some of our European colleagues have turned to us for help if their own channels of approach proved inadequate. There are a number of callers every few days who wish to inform themselves of items as varied as the address of a certain institution in the U.S. and the number of American expeditions which have worked in Egypt in the past. There were also several American archaeologists on visits from Athens and Jerusalem whom we took to some of the sites near Cairo, and there is the ever-present task of keeping abreast of what is going on in the field and of writing it up for the Newsletter. But it was the showing of Mr. Garner's film EGYPT - A JOURNEY INTO THE PAST which brought the Center to the attention of a wider public here in Cairo, and in order to follow up this interest it has been decided to arrange a number of tours for interested members of the American colony and their friends.

The first of these tours had been scheduled on Sunday, January 9, from 10 to 12 A.M., for a visit to Giza. It was announced on the Fulbright bulletin board and in the Embassy inter-office daily circular ('walking shoes and flashlights recommended'). About 60 people turned up, meeting with the staff of the Center at the northwest corner of the Great Pyramid. For some of them it was their first visit to Giza. By special arrangement with the Department of Antiquities the group saw some of the mastabas in the Eastern Cemetery, after certain features of the Cheops Pyramid, the pyramid temple, the causeway, the causeway boat grave, the secret tomb of Hetep-heres, and the general lay-out of the cemetery had been pointed out in an informal talk. The chapels of Khufu-khaf and Meresankh III were visited; then the group crossed over to the north side of the Second Pyramid. It is rarely entered, but through the kindness of Professor Ahmed Fakhry who sent some of his men with powerful lamps and secured the keys, a visit to the interior was made possible which the group seemed to enjoy very much. They then called on Professor Fakhry at his house in the Western Cemetery and rested their weary feet. He actually provided refreshments and took small groups through his



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museum and store rooms to show them antiquities from his excavations at Dahshour. After enjoying the view the group disbanded and everyone made his way back to Cairo on his own.

The next tour under the auspices of the Center took place the following Sunday. A visit to the Roman Fortress of Old Cairo and to the Coptic Museum had been arranged, and in spite of the fact that newcomers have a difficult time finding the place, which is not easily accessible except by car or suburban train, 89 Americans turned up although there had been no newspaper publicity. The Director of the Coptic Museum, Dr. Pahor Kladios Labib, sacrificing his Sunday morning, took one part of the group around while Mr. Bothmer guided the rest. Although intended for only one hour the visit extended to more than two, and at least 40 participants later visited the church of Saint George and other Coptic sites in the neighborhood. We hope to continue these Sunday excursions for several weeks since interest among the American colony seems to be growing and those who wish to participate in the months to come may well form the nucleus of an active group of Center Members in Egypt.

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CENTER MEMBERS IN EGYPT

The resident Members of the Center in Cairo this winter include Professor Kermit Schoonover and Professor E. E. Calverley, our Vice President, both at the American University at Cairo. Then there are Dr. Simpson and Mr. Bothmer, and Mr. and Mrs. John Dimick who returned on January 18 from a month's visit to the U.S. In the beginning of December Dr. Henry G. Fischer, of the Egyptian Department, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, arrived. He takes part in Professor Bryan W. Emery's excavation at North Saqqara to the end of January when the University of Pennsylvania's excavation at Memphis will get under way. Shortly before Christmas Dr. Louise A. Shier, Curator of the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology of the University Museum, Ann Arbor, came to Cairo for a 4 - 5 months stay in Egypt. She is on leave of absence from the University of Michigan to study lamps and textiles of Graeco-Roman and Coptic Egypt in connection with work on the material from the 1924-1935 excavations of the University of Michigan at Karanis and Dimay in the Fayum and Terenouthis in the Delta. She will spend most of her time in Cairo and Alexandria, but plans to travel also in the Fayum and in Upper Egypt. Before coming to Cairo she visited museums in England, Paris, and Italy, and on the way home she intends to spend several weeks in Greece. Dr. George R. Hughes, a Trustee of the Center, and Dr. Charles F. Nims, arrived early in October and continue their epigraphic work at the University of Chicago's headquarters at Luxor. Dr. Rudolf Anthes, Curator of the Egyptian Department of the University Museum in Philadelphia, arrived in Cairo on January 22; he will be the Egyptologist in charge of the University of Pennsylvania's excavation beginning in February, while Mr. John Dimick is its field director.

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THE CHEOPS BOAT GRAVE

On January 9, Mr. Simpson and Mr. Bothmer, provided with the special passes which are now issued for visits to the site on Sunday and Friday afternoons, went to the boat grave again, in the company of the Chairman of the Committee which supervises the work, Professor Abdel Moneim Abubakr. Thirty-one of the forty-one main blocks forming the roof of the chamber had been removed and are resting

between the shed and Pyramid of Cheops. The thirty-second block was just outside the shed on the skid, its under side supported by wooden rollers by means of which these blocks are being displaced after they have been raised off the shelf over the grave. By now the eastern end of the boat is clearly visible, and although it is partly covered by loose timbers, long poles, and some of the planking, the stern can be distinguished, and thus it appears that, at least on this side, the shell of the vessel is essentially intact. What may be called the gunwale, however, has by no means a smooth edge, and it has been suggested that the upper part of the boat's rail has been taken down in sections and stored alongside as well as on top of the panels mentioned in an earlier report. Further toward the middle of the vessel, the gunwales disappear under an assortment of boards and planks while the top is covered by the ubiquitous large panels. On them rest at least four wooden doors with their characteristic end pieces, one of which fits into the threshold while the other one pivots in the hole of the lintel. It remains to be seen whether the large panels form sides and roofs of a series of cabins which stood on the deck of the vessel and whether these doors belong with them. Much rope, matting, and some kind of gray, partly decayed tissue is visible everywhere; there are several large oars, and at regular intervals a strip of plaster runs across the top layer of wood indicating the means by which the ceiling had been sealed off after the blocks has been put in place: some of the plaster had run down between the blocks before hardening and left its tell-tale mark on the vessel. Thus far twelve large oars have been counted, but there may be more hidden under the large beams and panels.

An amazing feature is the humidity registered in the boat grave. Although it may sound unbelievable, the hygrometer registered 83 per cent humidity at the bottom of the pit near the west end after the first three or four ceiling blocks has been taken off. Since then the humidity has gradually decreased and measured about 60 per cent as of January 8, a sign that the wood is becoming drier, but how it survived at all for thousands of years in a sealed airspace nearly saturated with humidity has yet to be explained. Now that the vessel is almost completely uncovered another unusual feature becomes apparent, namely its proportions. For a length of about 130 feet it has only a seven-foot beam and thus appears to be very slender and probably hard to manoeuver. It remains to be seen if size and proportions of the boat throw any light on its use and function as intended by the ancient Egyptians.

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DELTA SITES

Although economically and socially the most important part of Egypt, both ancient and modern, the Delta attracts very few visitors, and this in spite of the fact that its antiquities can be reached fairly easily from Cairo. Many important sites of Lower Egypt were partly excavated more than half a century ago and have remained virtually untouched since then, save for remains of ancient settlement which have been much reduced by fellaheen digging for sabakh to be used as fertilizer. Mapping and photographic recording of the remains of the ancient sites in the Delta have not been carried on since World War II except for some work done by Labib Habachi, now Chief Inspector of Upper Egypt, and Pierre Montet, at present professor at the Collège de France. Even Egyptologists rarely venture afield to the north of Cairo and as a result the Antiquities Department is not in the habit of issuing passes for that region.

To visit these sites, however, under the guidance of a young French scholar, Monsieur Jean Yoyotte, who is well versed in the history and geography of the Delta and the topography of the ancient cities and their sanctuaries was an excursion from which this writer benefited greatly. The landscape is entirely different from that of the upper Nile valley, even country roads are much better kept and more frequently traveled, and the main highways are in excellent condition. We set out early one morning in the beginning of the year, unfortunately on a day when a dense fog reduced the visibility to something like 50 yards or less for the first few hours. Therefore, when Tell el Yahudiyeh was reached, little could be made out except the high earth walls which once surrounded the Ramesside temple and the city of Onias. No modern plan exists, and though the place is mainly known for the glazed tiles found there in the past, which have found their way into many museums, it would be worth while to explore its topography once more and map the remains of the Jewish temple of Ptolemaic times as well as the extent of the ancient settlement.

Gradually the fog disappeared, the sunshine became brighter, and hugh white clouds under a blue sky changed the aspect of the flat countryside completely. Fields as far as the horizon, occasionally a tall palm tree or two in the distance, clusters of houses surrounded by accacia trees, weeping willows along the large and small canals which crisscross the scenery in all directions, and people everywhere in the cultivation and on the roads --- such is the appearance of the Delta, essentially unchanged for several thousand years. The next site which was visited, Saft el Hena, lies directly to the south of the modern highway linking Alexandria with Ismailiya on the Suez Canal. The village marks the place where, toward the end of the last century, Edouard Naville discovered the traces of Phacusa, once the capital of a nome or province which was the home of the god Sopdu. The houses are built on the remains of the ancient town, at an elevation of some 10 or 15 feet above the cultivation and probably harbor many remains of pharaonic monuments in and under their foundations. About 200 yards to the west the tomb of an Arabic Sheikh crown a low hill amidst the fields; most likely ancient buildings are hidden below. Walking on the slippery little mud walls or dams which surround each cultivated plot of land we found the fragment of an over-lifesize granite statue of Ramesses II half-buried under some shrubbery which willing fellaheen uncovered for us and rolled over so that it could be studied and photographed. Another temporary mud dam nearby contained the fragment of a second statue of the same king, this time of colossal size, and far afield could be seen a number of large rectangular black basalt blocks here and there which indicate the wide area formerly covered by the pavement of the temple. Having made ourselves known to the Omdah (mayor) on arriving, we enjoyed on this trip through the fields the company of the village guard, a most helpful and courteous fellow, which in turn assured the cooperation of the peasants who did not seem to mind the strangers crossing their fields. They pointed out several millstones near and in the village which had been fashioned from the basalt paving blocks, and after taking photographs of the village guard and his brother in order to present them with their pictures at a future visit we departed for Zagazig, some seven miles further west. Before reaching this large town, however, there is a by-pass running southwest toward the Cairo road and after another minute or two it crosses Tell Basta, the site of ancient Bubastis, best known for the thousands of cat bronzes which have found from here their way to collections all over the world. Between this road and Zagazig lie the remains of the Old Kingdom temple of Pepy I; several large limestone pillars and jambs are still in situ while the lintel and the inscriptions from the apper part of the jambs are since 1939 in the Cairo Museum (J.E. no. 72132-72133). The inscriptions indicate that a 'House of the Hathor of Dendara,' protectress of this king of Dynasty VI, existed

at the Temple of Bubastis which, incidentally, furnished blocks with royal names as early as Cheops. Brick structures surround the limestone sanctuary, partly surmounted by a typically Roman pavement. The true height of former habitation, however, can best be seen on the other side, the east side of the modern road where gigantic brick 'towers' rise to the sky and lend the immense site a romantic aspect. A vast field of granite and quartzite blocks marks the main temple from which a number of fine reliefs went to American museums. Although the water level is, at this time of the year, by no means low, no infiltration was visible; what deters the twentieth century excavator from working in the Delta is probably more the gigantic labor involved than the fear of striking water. The barren hills of Bubastis, largely untouched thus far, look certainly promising enough, and the dig undertaken by the Department of Antiquities 15 years ago (the first since the 'eighties') covers only a few yards here and there beyond the temple excavated by Naville. Many reliefs of fine quality, known only in line drawings from the old publication of the Egypt Exploration Fund, are still lying about and should be recorded photographically at least.

Another excursion led us to Kôm Abu Billo, the cemetery and town of Terenouthis, which was partly excavated by F. Ll. Griffith in 1887-1888 and from which came a number of fine limestone reliefs of Ptolemy I Soter. The site was again explored by the University of Michigan in 1934, but Griffith's publication (of 1890) offers the only description of the topography of Kôm Abu Billo. The party included Professor Iskander Badawy, of Cairo University, Mr. Yoyotte, our indefatigable expert, and Dr. Louise A. Shier, Curator at the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, Ann Arbor, Michigan. After driving 65 kilometers from Mena House on the desert road toward Alexandria there is a macademized road which branches off on the right and leads in a northeasterly direction after 25 km. to the edge of the Delta. One crosses a drainage ditch, the railroad tracks, and the Raiyah el Beheira canal, follows the canal to the north until on the right the village of Tarraneh appears, recrosses west into the desert and, circumventing the deep excavations caused by steamshovels digging for gravel, bears south again until the northwest corner of the mudbrick temple enclosure is reached. This last stretch amounts to about 20 km. The temple was situated on the edge of the desert plateau and offers a fine view over the intervening 1500 yards of ancient town and cemetery and over the cultivation. Griffith noted two sites, one to the north and one to the south of the ancient caravan road from the Wadi Natrûn which descends into the Delta at this point and gave Terenouthis its importance until the town was destroyed in the Middle Ages by a Bedouin tribe. The north site, rising gradually to the temple enclosure, is more important, and at its lowest point, to the east, many high mud-brick house-walls are still preserved. Like gutted dwellings after a devastating conflagration, they stick out of hundreds and hundreds of little hills formed by potsherds, faience fragments, column remains, broken granite millstones, and more potsherds, a weird sight from the height of the temple enclosure. The latter, also of mud-brick, measures about 60x80 yds. and is fairly well preserved, but there is no trace left of the temple as Griffith already noted. Its stone slabs had long been used locally, and the reliefs are dispersed from Glasgow, Scotland, to Philadelphia, Pa. In the early twenties a fine white limestone chapel of Ptolemaic times was discovered directly east below the southeast corner of the temple enclosure on the sloping hillside. Only the upper half emerges from the potsherds, but the roof is intact and though it is undecorated it offers a fine example of good workmanship dating from the last centuries before the Christian era. Mr. Badawy measured it and made a plan of it; interesting is the construction of the double roof which offers a hiding place above the ceiling of the two chambers, reached by a horizontally sliding panel whose

emplacement is perfectly preserved. It would take several days to explore the site properly in its entire extent and to note the more important fragments lying about. The vast cemetery extending between town and temple enclosure has obviously been turned over a good many times in the past, but it deserves a systematic excavation. Many large holes dug recently indicate that Kôm Abu Billo has apparently still something to offer. In addition it must be stressed that this large site has never been mapped properly and that no plan exists of either the temple enclosure or the church with the tiled pavement discovered by Griffith. The return trip to Cairo followed the same route taken in the morning, this time, however, illuminated by the strange light of a colorful desert sunset.

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THEBES - DECEMBER, 1954

The 'mudir' of Thebes is, as before, Mr. Labib Habachi, the scholarly Chief Inspector of Upper Egypt, whose domain reaches from Diospolis Parva, just south of Abydos, to Wadi Halfa at the Sudan border. His inspectors are: Yacoub Farah (Assuan), Shehata Adam Mohammad (Luxor), and Ibrahim Kamel (Qurna, Theban Necropolis), whereas Dr. Mohammad Hammad, architect as well as Egyptologist, is now in charge of Karnak since Monsieur Henri Chevrier has definitely retired from the Antiquities Department and has settled in Paris.

During the fall the temple of Luxor was inundated waist high by water infiltration through the ground which has left tell-tale salt marks throughout the monument. In the old days there existed an arrangement whereby the overflow of the high Nile could be let into the temple which used to wash out the salt deposited by infiltration from below, but this has long been out of use. To the east the landscaping of the large area lying between the temple and the town of Luxor has made good progress, but the excavation begun on the north side when Mr. Zakaria Goneim was Chief Inspector has not yet been resumed. The two rows of five sphinxes both end abruptly thirty feet below the foundations of the not-so-modern houses abutting on the site, and further expropriation procedures are said to be in progress in order to advance the clearing further in the direction of Karnak. The princely palais at the southern end of the avenue passing by the Winter Palace Hotel belongs now to the government, and though it has been claimed by the State Tourist Department to be transformed into a casino, and by the Department of Antiquities to be used as a museum, no decision has yet been reached.

At Karnak the main attraction to the Egyptologist is, of course, the now famous stela of Kamose on which Mr. Simpson reported in Newsletter XIV. It was found in the latter part of July, 1954, face down under the north colossus of Ramesses II in front of the Second Pylon, bedded on a layer of sand. Above it were other blocks of New Kingdom monuments, and the emplacement of this large stone, originally probably 135 cm. high, under the statue of the most prominent and magniloquent king of Dynasty XIX, can hardly be regarded as accidental. The stela measures now about 220 x 110 cm. and is well protected in a large sand box with lid, directly south of the well known shrine of Sesostris I. Eventually it will be set up there is a show case with glass front. Except for a few lines where the surface of the stone has flaked off, the text is well preserved; the name of the man represented in the lower left reads Neshy, and his title has been interpreted as mr-htm or mr-šn. The gigantic statue of the High Priest Pinodjem,

mentioned by Dr. Hughes in Newsletter XII, is being pieced together, and the Second Pylon continues to furnish Amarna-style blocks of unusually large size decorated with curious animal scenes. They are unlike anything known from the early period of Akhenaten and, if more of them come to light, will form an important contribution to the art history of the declining Dynasty XVIII. In this connection it should be added that an incised fish spewing three water plants adorns the Kamose stela at the bottom, between the representation of Shenyt and the last lines of the text. The motif is that discussed in MdIK 5 (1934), pp. 158-164 & pl. XXVII, but its connection with the historical text is by no means clear. At Karnak North Monsieur Cl. Robichon continues his patient restoration work of the material found in the last seasons before all French excavations were shut down.

On the west side at Thebes the electrification of the Royal Tombs in the Biban el Moluk has been greatly enlarged, but the most startling sight is probably the remnants of Paramount's 'Ten Commandments' at Deir el Bahri where the approach to Hatshepsut's terraced temple is almost blocked by giant plaster sphinxes and papier-maché columns, mounted on huge wooden sledges. The columns especially offer a weird aspect, lying on their side, but complete with base, capital, and abacus, obviously in one piece. To photograph the majestic amphitheater will not be possible until these dummies of a modern age have served their purpose and are removed.

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A NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF NUBIA

The proposed High Dam south of Assuan will inundate the upper Nile Valley completely well beyond the Third Cataract. Wadi Halfa will disappear entirely, and even the cliffs above the rock temple of Abusimbel are going to be covered by water. To preserve a record of the monuments above ground as well as of the remains of civilization still unexcavated, the Minister of Education appointed a Committee in December, 1954, to inspect the sites to be affected and to submit a report as to how they could be fully recorded. This Committee, headed by Selim Hassan, Ahmed Fakhry, and Labib Habachi, returned from its two-week visit to Nubia on January 6. Professor Selim Hassan drew up a 60-page report which he submitted to the Minister on January 9. It will be printed soon in Arabic as well as in English and French and circulated among scholars of all countries for further suggestions. It envisages an Institute of the Archaeological Survey of Nubia to be founded at Assuan which will serve as headquarters for five sections which are to deal with the following tasks:

1. To excavate the sites which have not yet been explored.
2. To photograph in detail all ancient monuments in the area which will be affected by the High Dam.
3. To film these monuments in color.
4. To copy all inscriptions by hand as well as to make squeezes of them.
5. To make a survey of all ancient monuments, both topographical and architectural.

It has been stressed by several members of the Committee that the Egyptian Government will invite foreign cooperation when the final plan for the Archaeological Survey has been approved. Meanwhile Dr. Luther Evans, Director-General of UNESCO, has visited Nubia, and there are some rumors that his organization will take an

active part in the recording of the monuments to be flooded as a result of the implementation of the High Dam project. It was announced on January 15 that UNESCO would soon establish in Cairo a documentation center for Egyptian antiquities for which an allocation of \$19,000 had been approved by UNESCO. Madame Chr. Desroches Noblecourt is in charge of the project.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS FROM THE NEAR EAST: First Instalment (held over from Newsletter XV for lack of space)

Mr. William K. Simpson, Research Associate of the Center in Cairo, recently had occasion to spend several weeks in Iran and Syria. The news he gathered is reported herewith:

"In November I was invited to go to Tehran to assist on a project connected with the United Nations, and since my major work in Egypt had not started, the Fulbright authorities kindly gave the permission necessary for me to undertake the trip. As a result the Director of the Center has asked me to contribute a section on archaeological activity in the Near East. Since Cairo is a collecting point for information, we would like to increase the Center's usefulness by reporting such news, although it is not strictly connected with Egypt. Before the end of the year I hope to be able to include other reports based on news obtained from friends and associates in Iraq, Jordan, and Turkey. For the present the following news of Iran and Syria will have to suffice. The season has just begun as this report is being written (November 22nd), and news of any important finds may have already reached the press.

"Iran: Tehran is filled with businessmen who have come from all parts of the world to persuade the government to spend the new oil royalties on their goods and projects. It is therefore a busy city indeed. M. Godard has recently retired from his long service as Director of the Antiquities Department, and M. Mustafavi, a veteran of many years service in the Department, has been appointed in his place. Two archaeological enterprises are in progress. At Persepolis the Department is conducting a limited season of excavation and conservation under the direction of M. Sami, assisted by M. Asafi. Their plans consist of continuing the examination of the northernmost area of the platform. In this area they hope to find traces of the workshops of the artisans who built the palaces and reception halls, for last year they discovered there two capitals similar to the famous bull capitals from the Apadana, save that eagles' heads replace the bulls' heads. They assume that these were executed for a building that was never erected. A useful guide to the site has just appeared in English, and our readers may well wish to know of it: Ali Sami, Persepolis (Takht-i-Jamshid), Shiraz, 1954. In addition to plans and illustrations, it includes a summary of the excavations and remarkable discoveries at the site during the last few years. It is therefore a valuable supplement to Persepolis I by Erich Schmidt, the magnificent description of the site published by the Oriental Institute.

"M. Ghirshman resumes his excavations this month at Choga Zambil where he will continue for four months before going to Susa for an additional two. His work at Choga Zambil has led him to remarkable conclusions concerning the nature of the ziggurat. Until recently we have believed that the ziggurat was essentially a temple tower, and we have been all too ready to heap scorn on those nineteenth century archaeologists and adventurers who imagined that ziggurats were the tombs of kings. Now M. Ghirshman has discovered chambers in the ziggurat of Choga Zambil,

and he believes that they must have been made as tombs for the god and also perhaps the king. To what extent these preliminary conclusions are justified and whether they can be applied to the Mesopotamian ziggurats remains to be seen.

"At Susa M. Ghirshman hopes to reach the Achaemenian level of occupation, and if this level is reached we can look forward to interesting results. In addition to Persepolis, Choga Zambil, and Susa a short archaeological prospection was made at Kermanshah by the Department. At Isfahan work is being continued on the restoration of the great mosques, a project seemingly nearing completion. The pavilion known to all students of Iranian art and architecture as Chehel Sotoon is an ever growing museum of Islamic art, and objects which are not well protected in their present locations are being moved there for safety and conservation. At Shiraz the Museum is also receiving additions, and the Madrasah-i-Khan is being restored. It is to be hoped that the activities of the Department of Antiquities will increase, and that the policy of giving a share of the finds to foreign excavating institutions will encourage an American institution to return to Iran.

"It may also be of interest to prospective travelers to Iran to mention that the number of American technical assistance personnel there exceeds 2,000, and that they have units in all the principal cities. Although I did not have the opportunity to see many of them, they are always of great assistance to travelers.

"Syria: In Damascus Dr. Selim Adel Abd el Haqq, Director General of the Syrian Department of Antiquities, very kindly gave me an account of the archaeological work in progress. At Amrit the Department is beginning a season to which M. Dunand has been invited to preside over the conduct of the work and to publish the results. The major occupation is believed to have been subsequent to the destruction of Ugarit, and the site has therefore been chosen to fill in some of the gaps in the stratigraphical knowledge of Syria for the periods immediately following 1200 B.C. At Raqqa Mr. Nassib Soliby is continuing the Department's work, now in its fourth season. A season is also scheduled for Jebel, the site of a famous Roman Theatre.

"In addition to the Department's work there are no fewer than four 'chantiers' being conducted by foreign institutions. At Palmyra M. Paul Collard has been directing the Swiss Expedition's campaign at the Temple of Baal-Shemaim, where he has uncovered the peribolus. The work will be continued next year. At Rasafa a German Expedition under Johannes Kollwitz has resumed a program initiated in 1952. M. Schaeffer returned to Ras Shamra in October and is scheduled to continue until the end of November. Early in his season he found a remarkable ivory head of a king in the Royal Palace; the head was incrustated with gold and lapis lazuli. In the Damascus Museum can be seen several objects bearing Egyptian hieroglyphs, for the most part importations from Egypt to Ras Shamra; these objects derive from the most recent campaigns at the site. The fourth foreign expedition is that at Mari. It is now in progress and is scheduled to continue, under M. Parrot's direction, until just before Christmas. The Director-General of the Department also informed me that the Swedish Expedition, which excavated at Tell es Salihyeh in the vicinity of Damascus, may return for another season. The number of foreign institutions active in archaeological projects in Syria is especially noteworthy, considering that the present antiquity laws and policy do not make it possible for them to receive a share of the finds. The division of material into shares for the National Museum and the foreign institution is still practiced in Iraq and Iran under their far-sighted policy of encouraging outside interest in archaeology.

"Mention should be made of the following publications: Gabriel Saadé, Ras-Shamra, Ruines d'Ugarit, Beirut, 1954, a short history and guide to the site; Exhibition of the Archaeological Discoveries of the Year 1952, a pamphlet published for the Damascus Museum; and the second volume (1952) of Les Annales archéologiques de Syrie, which includes reports on Mari and Ras Shamra."

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS FROM THE NEAR EAST: Second Instalment

"Since I last reported on the archaeological activity in the Near East, I have been fortunate in securing information from Jordan and Iraq.

"Jordan: Through the kindness of Rev. Philip C. Hammond, a former classmate of mine at Yale Graduate School, I have been able to collect the following news. At Jerash Miss Diana Kirkbride is continuing her work on the reconstruction of certain monuments. At Petra Mr. Peter Parr is engaged in similar efforts. Father Sylvester is excavating at Bethany; the levels range from the Persian to Islamic periods. On the Mount of Olives the Dominican fathers Bagatti and Saller have been uncovering a group of Middle Bronze Age graves. The chief archaeological project, Jericho, is scheduled to begin in January and to last for three months; the work will continue to be under the direction of Miss Kenyon. After the conclusion of the Jericho season, the American Schools for Oriental Research will again return to Dhiban in Moab; the Director, Dr. Morton, will be assisted by Rev. Hammond.

"Iraq: I hope to be able to have more news of Iraq later in the year. At present, the readers of the Newsletter might be interested in the discovery of several Egyptian statues in the ruins of a palace at Nineveh. Dr. Naji el Asil, Director-General of the Department of Antiquities, kindly sent me photographs of casts of the inscriptions. Unfortunately, I have not yet received details of the size and nature of the statues. The inscription is one of Taharqa, whose name is followed by the epithet, 'beloved of Onuris.' The interest of the inscription lies in the name of the cult place which follows the name of the god. It is determined by the signs for desert and city, but the photographs of the casts do not make a reading possible at this time. It seems likely that the statues were taken to Nineveh by Asarhaddon or Ashurbanipal after one of their campaigns in Egypt. The cult place of Onuris, although it cannot be clearly read, suggests that the statue was set up in Palestine or Syria; it would be hard to fit any known cult place of the god into the traces seen in the cast."

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ON SENDING PHOTOGRAPHS TO CAIRO

In connection with a routine communication an American museum recently sent a set of photographs of Egyptian sculpture to the Center's office in Cairo. They had been dispatched by parcel post and insured for \$10. On December 23, 1954, the Director received a notice to come to the main post office and accept the small parcel after payment of customs duty in the amount of \$7.16.

Although Egypt has made great strides toward modernization of governmental procedure and administration, a number of laws and regulations, dating back half a century or more, have not yet been modified, and one of them states that photograph equipment as well as photographs are subject to import duty amounting to 65-80 per cent ad valorem. Since the declared insurance value was stated to be \$10, the postal authorities had followed the law to the letter and demanded the payment due.

The Director demurred, and on the advice of the sympathetic postal inspector called on the Office of the Permanent Under Secretary of State of the Finance Ministry in another part of town where he explained that photographs of Egyptian antiquities, just as much as books and pamphlets on that subject, are media of information the free interchange of which should be encouraged rather than impeded. The official of the Finance Ministry agreed wholeheartedly. There was, however, this ancient law on the book, but he finally picked up the phone and talked at length with the Director of Customs at the Cairo Post Office. As a result Mr. Bothmer was assured that only the legal minimum duty would be charged, and so he returned to the post office to meet the Director of Customs. This gentleman, though very busy, immediately cut through all red tape and set the minimum customs fee at FT . 25 (\$.72). A government stamp paper was purchased, an application drawn up (in Arabic) for reduction of the customs duty, duly signed and sealed and filed, and four days later the package of photographs was turned over to the addressee at the post office in Garden City. Total cost: PT 25 plus PT 5 for the stamp paper, not counting gasoline and the three hours spent at post office and ministry and en route.

The easiest way to send photographs to Cairo (easiest for the recipient, that is) would be by registered first class mail; and it is helpful if the contents are not stated on the envelope.

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THE NEW COPTIC INSTITUTE IN CAIRO

The inauguration of the Higher Institute of Coptic Studies may be regarded as a major event in the cultural history of modern Egypt. For a long period scholars reserved most of their attention to ancient Egypt, and Orientalists spared no effort in studying Egypt under the Islam, whereas Christian Egypt, the missing link between those two stages of Egyptian civilization, evoked comparatively little interest. Although the sciences of Egyptology and Islamology flourished, the science of Coptology has been kept in a state of semi-perpetual infancy. Nevertheless the impact of Coptic Egypt on world progress has been increasingly felt in recent times, and a group of Coptic scholars led by Dr. Aziz Suryal Atiya finally decided to give Coptic studies a home by the creation of the Institute. The idea spread fast among the Copts and received much support from many groups, including prominent Muslim scholars to whom the Christian heritage of Egypt represents a luminous chapter in their national history.

The Coptic Community Council donated the Anba Rueis Building, the value of which is estimated at nearly half a million dollars, and made an initial grant of several thousand Egyptian Pounds which, it is hoped, will be renewed. During the last few months, Dr. A. S. Atiya, first President and co-founder of the Institute, has worked very hard at inviting donations which have materialized in the form of money as well as collections of books. Large efforts have been made and have resulted in a greater organization than had been expected. The Institute is now open, containing numerous seminar rooms and lecture halls, an amphitheater, some studios, a fair library, and the modest beginnings of a museum in addition to an excellent auditorium installed with modern fittings and apparatus for the recording of Coptic music and divine Liturgies. The Institute is divided into twelve departments embracing the whole field of Coptic and allied studies. Linguistics, History, Social Studies, Archaeology, Art, Canon Law, Church Music, Theology, Ethiopic Studies, Semitics, and African Studies are represented by independent sections. Plans have also been made for a section of scientific photography and microfilming, and another for the preservation and restoration of antiquities. Heads of departments include Aziz S. Atiya

(History and Social Studies), Murad Kamel (Semitics, Ethiopian, and African Studies), Sami Gabra (Archaeology), Gorgi Sobhi (Linguistics), and numerous other scholars of wide reputation.

Though a postgraduate school, the Institute is primarily intended as a research center. It will bring out as many publications as its budget permits; its transactions will be issued annually. The Institute is also taking active steps to reserve a good Christian site for excavations. It will conduct scientific expeditions to remote monasteries and microfilm rare manuscript collections. A number of prominent Coptologists and other scholars from Europe and America have accepted the invitation to become Corresponding Members of the Institute, and their list will be published shortly with the Institute's Catalogue. One hundred scholars have already joined this non-religious, non-denominational foundation, including a limited number from overseas. The main idea behind the project is to give the Coptic humanities a home open to international cooperation and support. Courageously the Copts have started it, but the outer world must nurture it and help to make it what it should ultimately be: the world university of the Coptic humanities.

The address of the Institute is:
Higher Institute of Coptic Studies
Anba Rueis Building
Sharia Al Malika
Abbasiya
Cairo, EGYPT

Note: The foregoing has been adapted from an article written specifically for the Center's Newsletter by Professor Aziz Suryal Atiya, President of the Higher Institute of Coptic Studies, Cairo.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S REPORT DATED JANUARY 22

We went by jeep to Upper Egypt on December 7 and returned to Cairo ten days later. Miss Thomas' notes on car travel in Upper Egypt, published in Newsletter XIII pp.5-6, proved immensely useful and we followed her good advice in many instances. As far as Assiout the following stretches are macadamized and easily passable: Cairo to Beni Souef, Abu Kerkas to Minya, and Deirut to Assiout. The intervening parts are well-kept dirt roads, the surface of which is often smoother than the asphalt elsewhere. There were several long detours which took us on narrow roads and dams through the cultivation but since there are people everywhere and nearly every other crossroads is guarded by a policeman or soldier throughout the country it was not difficult to stay on the right track. At Assiout, the Windsor Hotel opposite the station is quite good and clean at PT 55 for a room with running cold water including service charge. The next morning, crossing on the barrage to the east bank, we had a good black-top road for about twenty miles to the south; then there are dirt roads all the way to Luxor until just a few miles before Karnak where another stretch of macadamized highway leads into the tourist center of Upper Egypt. Dirt roads are, on the whole, not bad in Upper Egypt especially those which are traveled by rural bus lines. They are at their worst usually within town limits and for about two or three miles beyond in either direction. Except on Fridays one sees every few minutes a fellah who spreads

soil from the embankment on the road surface and wets it down with water scooped from the nearest drain or canal, and by frantic signs he indicates to the approaching car on which side he wants it to pass his day's labor.

The country on the east bank between Assiout and Nag Hamadi is very beautiful, and especially the fertile crescent of the cultivation near Matmar, Tasa, and Badari is impressive. At Akhmim there was market day, and though we drove into the town the crowds were too dense for easy passing and we turned around and postponed the visit to this ancient town for another time. Further south the desert comes closer to the river; high cliffs dominate the road leading past Sheikh Farag, Naga ed Deir, Mesa'eed and Mesheikh where the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, excavated cemeteries ranging from Predynastic to New Kingdom times. Shortly before Nag Hammadi we crossed the river on the barrage to the west bank and after passing the town continued to nearby Heou, the site of the ancient Diospolis Parva. It was nearly 2 p.m. when we inquired for the road to Dendara, and being misled by an official of the sugar factory who apparently did not know the countryside we followed the river, which flows here in an east-west direction, on the south side on what turned out to be the worst "road" yet experienced. There is a drain running parallel to the river, and we found ourselves on the narrow north embankment which is formed by the roadbed of a narrow gauge sugar factory railroad. To drive on the tracks continuously is rough, even for a jeep, but what was more difficult than this "road" was the village life which overflows onto the path the car had to follow. For miles on end cane shelters for man and beast line both sides of the embankment which has to serve as yard for each habitation. People were cooking on the path of the jeep; there were chickens, geese, goats, sheep, donkeys, and camels, the latter often tethered to the rails and rearing at the sound of the motor, and this slowed down our progress. But the worst obstacle were the dogs, fierce creatures, each of which guards one straw shelter. They shot out with a roar and tried to get at our legs in the open jeep which passed their private domain in low gear, and since there were hundreds of these huts to be passed there were hundreds of these dogs to fend off. Where rural buses pass the dogs are omnipresent too, but they are a bit more cautious when it comes to attacking a vehicle in motion.

Gradually the extent of cultivation between the Nile and the desert becomes narrower, and after having been stuck behind the toy train of the sugar factory for half an hour because there was no space to pass it on either side, we reached El Marashda where the rails and the path end. There we found out that a slightly better road follows the drain, the name of which is Canal el Zir, on the south side. From then on we had 20 miles of open desert before regaining the cultivation just west of Dendara. The track is marked after a fashion, but there are numerous turnoffs and car tracks on both sides which misled us several times since we did not know the exact distance for which the desert route had to be followed. It is quite rocky and could not be easily maneuvered by an ordinary car, but the real difficulty lies in judging the distance to the narrow stretch of cultivation along the Nile and in deciding when to leave the high plateau. The sun was going down rapidly, but we finally reached Dendara while it was still light and were warmly greeted by Monsieur and Madame François Daumas who at that time occupied the resthouse of the Antiquities Department with their assistants for a few weeks.

The Temple of Dendara is one of the four or five great sights of Egypt, and while my project was to record there the pieces of Late Egyptian sculpture stored within the temple precinct, it was highly rewarding to explore the site for three days by the side of our informative host. Volume VI of Le Temple de Dendara is in press, and so is his book on the Mammisis of the Ptolemaic and Roman temples; now he is preparing Volume VII of the Dendara publication which was begun long before the war by E. Chassinat. Dendara, like so many well known places in Egypt, is not fully excavated. The temple of Hathor, the sacred lake, and the other buildings have been cleared in the past, but there are still mountains of rubble and potsherds within the enclosure and remains of chapels and other structures are visible in several places. It seems that the field on the east side of the enclosure wall has never been dug, while the territory to the south and west was once excavated by Petrie for the Egypt Exploration Fund and by Clarence Fisher for the University of Pennsylvania. Although there are plans of the main buildings within the enclosure the site has never been mapped properly. Sketch maps published more than half a century ago or, even worse, photostatic copies of sketch maps which have never been published are for many sites of Egypt the only guide the visiting archaeologist can hope to obtain when trying to find out what work had been done one or two generations ago.

As in so many temples of Upper Egypt the preservation work carried out by Baraize at Dendara is admirable and it can only be hoped that this activity of the Department of Antiquities will be maintained in the future as well. The site is, of course, well protected because it lies off the beaten track, but ancient buildings are in constant need of repair once they have been excavated, and Dendara is no exception. There are plans to clean the entire temple next season and especially to wash off the hornets' nests which have covered more and more sections of the outer walls decorated with sunk relief. One interesting item may be noted here: Dendara, like other sanctuaries, shows on its walls the characteristic grooves where the stones have been scraped with a rounded tool, and there is a theory that the resulting sand or rather powdered stone was used as medication or for amuletic purposes. How far back this popular custom goes can best be shown at the Mammisi of Nectanebo I at Dendara where an inscription follows directly the hollow of one of those grooves which proves that the latter had already been scraped out before the text was inscribed upon the wall.

We decided to go to Luxor by taking the jeep across the river rather than driving all the way to Esna, crossing on the barrage to the east bank and going another 30 miles north again to reach Thebes. We found a fellugah at El Tarasah, and after having had a short driveway cut into the embankment to get down to the river bank from the cultivation we drove on board over two rather flimsy planks. On the other side, however, things were not so easy. There was a steep 75-foot embankment rising directly from the river, and to widen the serpentine path used by the fellaheen would have involved a great deal of labor. At least one hundred people surrounded us and offered advice as well as help, but to get them organized exceeded my Arabic vocabulary and so I set out in the direction of Qena to present my problem to the local police. Fortunately a captain drove by in a jeep and after surveying the situation he selected a few strong men, told his driver to mount the Center's jeep and gave the signal. By the combined forces of the engine as well as of the fellaheen the vehicle safely reached the top in less than a minute, and after having taken coffee with the captain and some of his fellow officers we set out for Luxor where Chicago House received the tired and dusty travelers with its well known hospitality.

On the return trip we drove straight through to Assiout on the first day, staying on the east bank as far as Nag Hammadi, then crossing to the west bank on the barrage and following the road via Girga, Sohag, Tahta, and Aboutig which is not nearly as good as that on the east bank although much more populated. For the last stretch before Assiout we chose an alternate route which swings out to the west and runs partly along and partly through the desert. It is passable, and approaching the ancient Lycopolis from this side one has a splendid view of the town. On the second day we were back in Cairo early in the afternoon.

On that day, December 17, 1954, Professor Fakhry gave a splendid lecture on the oases of Egypt at the Fulbright office which drew more people than seats could be provided. The next day we took the Rev. and Mrs. Philip Hammon, of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, to Saqqara. They had come to Egypt for a Christmas visit, and on their return from Luxor, several days later, we visited the Coptic Museum together. On December 19 I visited the Cheops boat grave again in the company of Professor Abdel Moneim Abubakr, just when the twentieth ceiling block had been taken off. Ten days later Mr. Simpson and I drove to Lisht to study the pyramids of Amenemhat I and Sesostri I of Dynasty XII, the area of which had been excavated by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, many years ago. None of us had ever been there before, but Mr. Simpson's intimate knowledge of the Metropolitan Museum's excavation records made it possible to trace the salient features of the site. The jeep managed to get through the village with only a few inches to spare on either side, but an ordinary car would have to be left on the road beside the canal. We also crawled down into the tomb of Sesostri-ankh which, with the long texts lining the walls of the burial chamber, is well preserved and very interesting. Its intricate blocking system is featured in a recent issue of the Bull. Fac. Arts, Cairo Univ. (vol. XVI, part I, May, 1954, pp. 69-102: 'Dispositifs architecturaux contre le viol des tombes égyptiennes' par Dr. Alexandre Badawy). We then drove to Medum for our first visit to this pyramid of the end of Dynasty III. About 12 km. before El Wasta, at a village called Girza, there is a turn-off on the right (west) guarded by a soldier. This is where the Darb Girza branches off for the Fayoum. Following a country road for about 2 km. one reaches the black-top Fayoum highway. After 2.5 km. of open desert a well-marked trail leads off to the south, and after another 7 km. we arrived at the north-west corner of the Medum Pyramid. Its height and location, the approach through nearly level desert, and the vast area on which the Dynasty IV mastabas surrounding the pyramid are distributed are very impressive. Since the site can easily be approached by any ordinary car one wonders why so few visitors ever go there. We were, however, on that day not too lucky as far as the weather was concerned; it rained almost all the time, and on the return trip the roads were rather slippery and gradually dissolved into liquid mud so that it was difficult to keep the jeep in the middle of the embankments between cultivation and canal.

Before the end of the year it was learned that the plan for an Advisory Council for Coptic Egypt had been submitted to the Minister of Education who, in principle, had approved it. Thus far everything concerning Coptic Egypt had been referred to the Council on Islamic Egypt while Coptic scholars had long demanded a special Council for their field or at least a transfer to the Council for Pharaonic Egypt. The creation of an Advisory Council for Coptic Egypt, once the law has been passed, will greatly further Coptic studies and is expected to be of special benefit for the development of Coptic archaeology in this country. These three councils are bodies composed of experts who advise the Ministry of Education in all matters relating to their particular domain.

On January 12 the Center gave a tea for the Director General of the Department of Antiquities and Mrs. Mustafa Amer which was attended by some members of the Center, representatives of the visiting Fulbright scholars, the French Institute, the United Nations, and UNESCO. We were especially glad to greet Professor Bryan W. Emery and the entire staff of his Saqqara excavations, Dr. Klasens, Mr. Uphill, and Dr. Henry Fischer of the University Museum, Philadelphia. Other guests included Dr. Pahor Kladios Labib, Director of the Coptic Museum, and Mr. Masri of Ethiopian Airlines.

During that week, the staff of the Belgian Fondation Egyptologique Reine Elisabeth passed through Cairo on its way to El Kab where the Fondation resumes its excavations. They were Mr. Constant de Wit, now Curator at the Egyptian Department of the Musée du Cinquantenaire in Brussels, Mr. Arpag Mekhitarian, Secretary General of the Fondation, and Mr. Pierre Gilbert, who heads the Egyptian collection in Brussels since the retirement of Mademoiselle Werbrouck. On January 15 I attended a lecture on Egyptian poetry given by Mr. Gilbert at the Belgian Embassy in Garden City.

At the island of Sai, in the Sudan, the French Commission de Fouilles, founded by the late Raymond Weill, has been digging for some weeks. The mission is headed by Jean Vercoutter, and the staff includes Fernand Debono who will deal with the prehistoric material. Thus far they have worked on an enormous tumulus of about 130 feet in diameter which has already furnished much C-group material. Work will continue at least through the middle of February.

On January 18, for the first time in many years, a Nile steamer left for a leisurely voyage to Upper Egypt. Since it was tied up directly at the foot of the street we went in the morning to have a look at the accommodations and to say goodbye to friends. Mr. and Mrs. Simpson are on board and will report on the trip to Assuan, which is scheduled to last 11 days, in the next Newsletter. There were press photographers, and bunches of roses for the ladies, and the 'reis' in a long blue frock coat directed the casting off from the roof of the cabins on the upper deck, not quite like - but remindful of - representations in Old Kingdom reliefs. The steamer, the SS SUDAN, will ply between Assuan and Luxor for several weeks. The trip to Assuan costs 55 Egyptian Pounds, all side trips, transportation and guides included, and the passengers have to return to Cairo at their own expense.

A recent newspaper item reports that Wing Commander Abdul Latif El Boghdady, Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs, announced the construction of a cable railroad between Luxor and the west side of Thebes. The same clipping mentions floodlights for the temples of Karnak and Luxor and escalators for some of the tombs in the Valley of the Kings.

The site between the Cairo Museum and the 'Corniche' along the river has been cleared completely and plans are being made to build a new museum there. The ground floor is said to house selected masterpieces from the present Cairo Museum while the upper story will be used to exhibit Tutankhemen's treasure. The present Cairo Museum would then be closed and become a study collection for archaeologists.

At Mitrahine (Memphis) the red granite colossus of Ramesses II, the smaller of the two on the site, is being prepared for removal to Cairo where it will be set up on the square in front of the railroad station. It already rests on steel supports which are being raised by means of hydraulic jacks, and as soon as the Egyptian Army has prepared roads and bridges to carry the 80-ton load the statue will be taken to Cairo.

At Saqqara, where the causeway crossing the cultivation meets the desert, the area of the Unas Valley Temple is being cleared to render the access to the plateau more attractive. The ancient quai is now under repair, and one of the granite columns has been re-erected. The Swiss Institute began its excavations about four weeks ago at a site about midway between the Sun Sanctuary of Abu Gurab and the pyramids of Abusir in search of the Sun Sanctuary of King Weserkaf of Dynasty V.

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THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL STUDIES

One of the members of the American Research Center in Egypt is Visiting Professor for the current academic year in the School of Oriental Studies of the American University at Cairo. Dr. Edwin E. Calverley, after retirement as Professor of Arabic and Islamics and responsible editor of The Muslim World at the Hartford Seminary Foundation, taught his subjects for a year at the School of Advanced International Studies of The Johns Hopkins University at Washington, and lectured at the 1954 Aramco Summer Institute at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

At Cairo his course on Muslim Religion and Philosophy includes undergraduate students, American short-term teachers in the University, Fulbright and Foundation Fellowship advanced research scholars, and an increasing number of Egyptian and American ladies interested in the history of Islamic thought.

The School of Oriental Studies Department of the University also provides courses on the History of the Arabs, Egypt under Muslim Rule, and seminars on Contemporary Egypt, Modern Arabic Literature, Muslim Mystics, Arabic Classics, and offers research guidance for advanced students on subjects pertaining to Arabia and the Arabs.

Instruction in Arabic, both colloquial Egyptian and the standard literary language, by qualified Egyptian teachers has long featured the service of the S.O.S. to the missionary, governmental and business foreigners in Egypt. The program of seminars and lecture courses on Islamic history and culture was given noteworthy impetus by Professor Arthur Jeffery of Columbia University, the American Research Center's Director during the 1953-54 season.

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